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Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Letter dated 24 August 2005 from the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to bring to your attention the attached report on the implementation of the International Year of Rice — 2004 which was prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in its capacity as lead agency for the Year, in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations, other organizations and non-governmental organizations.

On 16 December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted its resolution 57/162, entitled "International Year of Rice, 2004", reaffirming the need to focus world attention on the role that rice can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty, thereby contributing to the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The successful implementation of the International Year of Rice — 2004 has raised considerably the awareness of the world's population of the role that rice can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty, and has led to increased support for the development of sustainable rice-based production systems. The report looks beyond 2004 and provides suggestions for consideration by the international community on how to stimulate efficient and productive sustainable rice-based production systems, which are essential for economic development and for an improved quality of life for much of the world's population.

With 852 million people being undernourished, I strongly believe that the international community needs to renew its commitment to the promotion of sustainable rice production. Therefore, I kindly request that the attached report be circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, under agenda item 58.

Favourable consideration of this request by the United Nations would be greatly appreciated.

(*Signed for*) Jacques **Diouf**

05-54626 (E) 281005

Annex to the letter dated 24 August 2005 from the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to the President of the General Assembly

Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the International Year of Rice — 2004

Summary

The present report describes events and achievements made at the national, regional and international levels throughout 2004 in implementing the "International Year" devoted to a commodity, in an unprecedented step in United Nations history. The report looks beyond 2004 and provides suggestions for consideration by the international community on how to stimulate efficient and productive sustainable rice-based production systems, which are essential for economic development and for an improved quality of life for much of the world's population. These systems are fundamental elements for attaining the Millennium Development Goal of reducing hunger and poverty.

I. Introduction

1. In resolution 57/162, adopted at its fifty-seventh session, the General Assembly declared the International Year of Rice — 2004. The resolution submitted by 43 Member States, noted that rice is the staple food for more than half the world's population and affirmed the need to focus world attention on the role that rice can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty in the attainment of the internationally agreed upon development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In the same resolution, the General Assembly invited the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to facilitate the implementation of the International Year of Rice in collaboration with Governments, the United Nations Development Programme, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), other relevant organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations.

2. The present report is for submission to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, Second Committee, under agenda item 56 entitled "Eradication of poverty and other development issues". The report was prepared by FAO in its capacity as lead agency for the International Year of Rice and in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other organizations and non-governmental organizations.

II. Background and issues

3. Rice is the staple food for more than half the world's population. Rice-based production systems in 113 countries in five continents and their associated post-harvest operations employ nearly one billion people worldwide. The intensification

of rice production with inefficient application of pesticides has caused significant damage to agro-biodiversity and resulted in environmental pollution. In addition, the populations of many rice-consuming countries are often afflicted with deficiencies of iron and vitamin A. Furthermore, the land and water resources for rice production are diminishing, while the population is still growing steadily.

4. In recognition of the challenges of global rice production, FAO and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) joined forces in 1999 to focus international attention on the rice industry and its role in achieving global food security. In November 2001, the FAO Conference adopted resolution 2/2001 and requested the Director-General of FAO to transmit it to the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the view to having the year 2004 declared as the International Year of Rice.

III. Implementation of the International Year of Rice — 2004

5. In January 2003, the FAO Steering Committee of the International Rice Commission met at FAO headquarters in Rome and established the FAO Organizing Committee and the Informal International Working Group (IIWG) for the International Year of Rice, which was made up of representatives of 17 rice-producing and consuming countries, as well as six United Nations agencies, five CGIAR centres, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. "Rice Is Life" was selected as the theme for the Year. The International Year of Rice was officially launched on 31 October 2003 by the FAO Director-General during the resumed substantive session of 2003 of the Economic and Social Council.

A. Objectives of the International Year of Rice implementation

6. The fundamental objective of the International Year of Rice implementation is to promote improved production and access to this vital food crop, which feeds more than half the world's population while providing income for millions of rice producers, processors and traders. The development of sustainable rice-based systems will reduce hunger and poverty and contribute to environmental conservation and a better life for present and future generations for whom "Rice Is Life".

B. National and regional stage

1. National committees and other arrangements

7. In 2004, governmental and public institutions, intergovernmental bodies and institutions, non-governmental organizations and private sector, youth sector and farmers' associations worldwide established their own International Year of Rice committees. More than 800 activities were implemented in 68 countries in five continents to celebrate the Year. The following section highlights just a few examples of the activities that took place in different regions in 2004.

2. Implementation of the Year in Asia and the Pacific

8. In an historic show of support for the goals of the International Year of Rice, the leaders of the Governments of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea signed the International Year of Rice poster during their summit meeting on 17 January 2004 in Jakarta. The Asian Development Bank, in collaboration with its member countries and IRRI, celebrated the Year in November at its headquarters, with the participation of policymakers in the region. Throughout the year, IRRI hosted or co-hosted 15 regional and international conferences and workshops for delegates from some 36 countries.

9. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan organized the World Rice Research Conference in Tokyo and Tsukuba with the participation of about 1,200 participants. The government of Hunan Province of China organized the Huaihua International Forum of Hybrid Rice and World Food Security, attended by participants from 22 countries, while the Indian Council of Agricultural Research organized the International Symposium on "Rice – from the Green Revolution to Gene Revolution". The King of Thailand presided over the Royal Ploughing Ceremony in May, while the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Viet Nam organized the Mekong Rice Conference in Ho Chi Minh City. As part of the International Year of Rice celebration, the Indonesian Rice Foundation published the book *Rice Is Beautiful*, while a Rice Week celebration was organized in July in West Java. The Philippines hosted the International Rice Forum in Manila, which attracted around 200 participants from 27 countries.

10. The world's largest risotto was cooked in Sydney in November, while in Bangladesh, a series of seminars, workshops and promotional activities was carried out. In Cambodia a rice book in Khmer was published, while in the Republic of Korea, the workshop on "World Rice Economy under the World Trade Organization System" was held in Seoul. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic the Rice Biodiversity Project was approved for on-farm conservation of rice germ plasm. In Malaysia, farmers' associations celebrated the Year with the launching of the 10-Tonne Club for rice farmers, while the Myanmar International Year of Rice Committee published three books: *Varieties of Rice*, *Rice Culture* and *Rice Research Activities*. In Pakistan, the awareness workshop on rice was organized at Mingora in Swat, and in Sri Lanka, seminars on the nutritive values of rice were conducted.

3. Implementation of the Year in Europe

11. Italy, Europe's largest rice producer and the host country of FAO, provided funding to ensure that developing countries had the opportunity to participate. It also organized its own celebratory events, including 29 conferences and public events on rice and the contribution of rice to livelihoods. In Germany, the Oldenburg Model United Nations organized a special conference on rice as a staple food. Elsewhere, the Rice Trade Outlook Conference was held in France, the Turkish National Rice Congress in Ankara and the Portuguese International Year of Rice seminar on markets, research, trends, production and the environment in Portugal. The private sector in Spain organized the international trade fair of rice in Pals, while in the United Kingdom, a week-long event highlighted the benefits of producing fish in rice fields.

4. Implementation of the Year in Latin America and the Caribbean

12. The International Centre for Tropical Agriculture and its Latin American Fund for Irrigated Rice supported the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (*Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária* or EMBRAPA) and other institutions in Brazil in the organization of the Latin American Congress on Rice Economics in Porto Alegre and a workshop on integrated crop management for rice production in Venezuela.

13. EMBRAPA also organized a conference on genetic development of rice in Latin America and the Caribbean. The *Centro para el Desarrollo Agrícola y Forestal* (CEDAF) organized the fifth meeting of the Technical Cooperation Network on Plant Biotechnology, which was followed by a "Rice Route" field day. A conference on the right to food and the role of rice in food security in Honduras was held in Tegucigalpa. In Colombia, an International Year of Rice exhibition, which included a display of many rice varieties, was part of the International Book Fair in May in Bogotá, while in Costa Rica a large festival was held at el Paseo Colón in San José. In Peru, the International Integrated Module on Rice was presented by the Agronomy College of the National Agrarian University in Lima. The Rice Cultivators' Association of Uruguay published a special issue on *El Arroz en el Mundo* to commemorate the Year. In Guatemala, a formal rice dinner was held with the participation of several embassies.

5. Implementation of the Year in the Near East and North Africa

14. The Agricultural Research Centre of Egypt organized a conference in Alexandria on advanced rice research for scientists and policymakers in the Near East region. In addition, 330 on-farm demonstrations on improved rice production techniques were carried out by the Egyptian Rice Programme in rice-producing areas of the country. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, 290 paintings on different aspects of rice were produced by elementary school students in Tehran, while the workshop on "Sustained Food Security — Priority Research Agenda for Decades Ahead" was held in Karaj province.

6. Implementation of the Year in North America

15. In the United States of America, the Fowler Museum of Cultural History in California organized an exhibit on "Rice and Its Culture" in which the American Centre for Wine, Food and Arts participated with a theme on "The Art of Rice: Spirit and Sustenance in Asia". Yale University organized a symposium on "The Future of Rice Biotechnology: Scientific Advances and Policy Issues", while in Arkansas, a time capsule which was sealed in 1954 at the Carlisle Elementary School to commemorate the first Arkansas rice crop was opened in October to celebrate the International Year of Rice and the centennial of rice cultivation in Arkansas. In Canada, the Dundas Studio Tour 2004 was organized to explore the theme of rice as a symbol of cultural identity and global unity.

7. Implementation of the Year in sub-Saharan Africa

16. The pan-African celebration of the Year was held in Accra with the theme "Rice is Life for Africans". The celebration attracted 600 participants including ministers of agriculture, senior officers and heads of governmental departments, Consultative Group centres and diplomatic missions in sub-Saharan Africa. The

Africa Rice Centre (WARDA) organized the third biennial regional rice research review for rice researchers from national research systems in sub-Saharan Africa and participated in the National Rice Day in Côte d'Ivoire with the theme "Celebrating the International Year of Rice in Africa".

17. The President of Nigeria visited a demonstration during the field day to celebrate the Year and distributed the New Rice for Africa (NERICA) seed to the participating farmers. NERICA is a new rice type developed for WARDA especially for low-input rice production in Africa. The production and distribution of NERICA seed also took place in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone during International Year of Rice celebrations. The Malgache Academy organized a round-table discussion on constraints to the application of rice research by farmers in the field and solutions, and a rice festival which included Malagasy art and culinary demonstrations was held in November. The African Institute for Capacity Development in Nairobi, organized a seminar on promotion of rice production and dissemination in Africa for Rice Is Life. The Liberian National Committee organized the International Year of Rice poetry contest, and in Burkina Faso, the International Year of Rice celebration took place in Bama in the rice-growing province Houet. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, field days and seed distribution took place in Pool Melabo. The National Committee for the International Year of Rice in Senegal organized a workshop on "The Situation of Rice Production and Plan of Action for 2004 and Beyond", while the Farmers' Rice Congress of the Gambia provided training activities to farmers to celebrate the Year. A five-day national show took place in Uganda, while in Sierra Leone, environment and rice production were the themes of an essay contest in public high schools.

C. The global stage

18. The background and goals of the International Year of Rice were presented in the five FAO regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Near East. The other major global events are listed below:

(a) *International Rice Conference at FAO (Rome) in February 2004*: Over 500 policymakers, rice specialists and rice industry representatives from 90 countries presented their perspectives. The conference allowed scientists and agricultural specialists to share their thoughts with policymakers on the sustainable way forward for rice production;

(b) *Global Scientific Contest*: The International Year of Rice Global Scientific Contest was coordinated with the invaluable support of IRRI. Over 200 articles on rice crop management (rice agronomy) and rice crop improvement (plant breeding, including rice biotechnology) were received from rice scientists and researchers worldwide. Two papers, one from China and one from Japan, won the award;

(c) *Global Photography Contest*: About 460 participants from 53 nations participated in the IYR Global Photography Contest "Rice Is Life" that was organized by IIWG with the aim of enhancing awareness of the role of rice in the fight against hunger and poverty;

(d) *World Food Prize International Symposium*: The Department of State of the United States awarded the World Food Prize to Professor Yuan Longping for hybrid rice development and Dr. Monty P. Jones for NERICA rice development;

(e) *World Rice Research Conference*: To help provide solutions to the many challenges facing the rice industry, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries organized the World Rice Research Conference. The opening symposium in Tokyo was attended by 450 delegates and the scientific symposium in Tsukuba by 1,200 of the world's leading rice researchers and scientists;

(f) *CropLife International Symposium*: CropLife International held a symposium called "Rice and Brussels Sprouts" in December. The symposium, held in Brussels, looked at the future of the rice crop in terms of improving its production and enhancing nutrition;

(g) *United Nations special rice cookbook*: The book *Rice around the World in 300 Recipes* was published by the Geneva-based *UN Special* magazine, the United Nations, the World Health Organization and FAO.

IV. Achievements

19. The official ending date of the International Year of Rice was 31 December 2004, but for the billions of people who rely on rice for their lives and livelihoods, the positive effect of the year's activities will continue.

A. Raising awareness, interest and understanding

20. National conventions, seminars, training, radio and television shows and programmes, scientific and popular articles, brochures, calendars, press briefings and many other promotional activities were carried out by governmental institutions, United Nations agencies, Consultative Group centres, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, farmers' associations and youth groups worldwide. The International Year of Rice official website (www.fao.org/rice2004/) was established to serve as a virtual meeting place for all participants. National and international trade and book fairs were used as grounds for promoting rice marketing and nutrition, stimulating interest in various rice technologies, disseminating information to the general public and increasing awareness of the role and importance of rice as a staple food. A vast number of publications are now available that grew out of the meetings of the International Year of Rice in 2004.

21. Governments and donors have enhanced awareness and understanding of the role that rice can play in attaining the Millennium Development Goal of reducing hunger and poverty and of the need to support new rice initiatives. The Government of the Philippines declared Rice Awareness Month in November, and the Government of Nepal pledged to celebrate a National Rice Day on 15 Asadh (mid-July). International Year of Rice stamps were produced in Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

B. International action in the field

22. The FAO Technical Cooperation Programme funded 13 national, regional and global field projects for rice and rice-based systems in the various developing regions. The Special Programme for Food Security, "TeleFood", and the Emergency, Relief and Rehabilitation Programme of FAO also implemented worldwide field projects with rice production as a major component. The Ministers of ASEAN endorsed in October 2004 a 10-year research plan that focuses on water shortage, global warming and inadequate human resources. The Asian Development Bank has funded two projects in Asia, while in sub-Saharan Africa, the African Development Bank approved funding to promote NERICA development. Likewise, Japan approved two projects to promote NERICA development and use in Ghana and Sierra Leone, and Italy approved two projects on rice development in the Pacific. The Government of Peru has already offered to host the twenty-first session of the International Rice Commission.

V. Recommendations

23. The sustainable increase of rice production and the diversification of rice-based production systems will require continuing investment in both research and development at national, regional and global levels to contribute to the achievement of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the World Food Summit.

A. Global recommendations

24. Following are the main recommendations for global actions to support sustainable rice production:

(a) Research and development in rice-based production systems need to be broadened to enhance not only food security but also human nutrition and to generate income for resource-poor farmers;

(b) FAO and other relevant organizations should continue to assist national Governments in the improvement and transfer of rice production technologies.

B. Regional recommendations

25. The strategies for sustainable increase in rice production must focus on:

(a) In Africa, the development of wetlands for the production of NERICA and improved rice varieties, and improvement of input accessibility;

(b) In Asia and the Pacific, the development of hybrid rice, rice biotechnology and rice integrated crop management systems as well as the diversification of the mono-rice systems;

(c) In Europe, the management systems for reducing production costs;

(d) In Latin America and the Caribbean, the development of rice-integrated crop management systems and rice biotechnology;

(e) In the Near East, the development of hybrid rice and water-efficient rice integrated crop management systems.

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Sixtieth session
Second Committee
Agenda item 52 (e)
Sustainable development: sustainable development in mountain regions

Letter dated 25 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you the Declaration of the Andes, which contains the conclusions of the Second Global Meeting of Members of the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, held in Cusco, Peru, on 28 and 29 October 2004 (see annex).

I would greatly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 52 (e).

(*Signed*) Oswaldo **de Rivero**

05-59624 (E) 141105

Annex to the letter dated 25 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

Declaration of the Andes
Second Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership
Cusco, Peru, 29 October 2004

The members of the Mountain partnership gathered in the city of Cusco, Peru, on 28-29 October 2004. In the course of their exchange of views, the participants recalled:

- The fundamental importance of chapter 13 of Agenda 21 "Managing Fragile Ecosystems — Sustainable Mountain Development", adopted by the Earth Summit (Rio de Janeiro, 1992);
- The General Assembly resolutions relevant to the International Year of Mountains 2002, i.e. 53/24 of 10 November 1998, 55/189 of 20 December 2000 and 57/245 of 30 January 2003;
- The Bishkek Global Mountain Platform of 1 November 2002;
- The Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, September 2002), and in particular its paragraph 42 addressing sustainable mountain development;
- The Basic Concept Document of the Mountain Partnership ("Bali Document", Bali, Indonesia, June 2002), which defines the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions;
- The decision of the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in particular paragraphs 22-24 on partnerships;
- The report of the United Nations Secretary-General prepared for the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, describing achievements made at the national, regional and international level within the framework of the International Year of Mountains 2002;
- The Conclusions of the First Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership held in Merano, Italy, in October 2003;
- The Workplan on Mountain Biodiversity adopted by the Seventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2004;
- The results from the International Workshop on Mountain Ecosystems: "A Vision for the Future", held in Cusco, Peru, in April 2001;
- The results of the World Meeting on Mountain Ecosystems: "Mountain to 2020: Water, Life and Production" held in Huaraz, Peru, in June 2002;
- The Declaration of the Adelboden Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M), held in Switzerland, in June 2002; and

- The Thimpu Declaration of the Celebrating Mountain Women Conference, held in Thimpu, Bhutan, in October 2002.

WE DECLARE:

We re-affirm solemnly our commitment to fulfil the goals of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as well a other universally agreed multilateral instruments relevant to sustainable mountain development;

We underline the strategic importance of the conservation of genetic resources, both wild and domesticated, because of their present and potential value;

We reaffirm that States have sovereign rights over their biological resources as stated in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the duties towards the conservation of biological diversity and proper use of biological resources in order to safeguard mountain ecosystems;

We share a common vision of sustainable mountain development with social equity, which includes a commitment to improve the livelihoods of mountain populations and respecting their cultural heritages as well as to conserve and manage mountain ecosytems;

We also recognize the importance of indigenous and traditional knowledge and cosmogony for sustainable development of mountain areas. We consider that a special intellectual property protection should be granted to indigenous and traditional knowledge, products and processes;

We fully recognize the essential contributions of indigenous peoples, women, youth and civil society in all mountain regions. In this context, we underline the need for full consideration of indigenous peoples and gender perspectives in all issues of sustainable mountain development;

We recognize the importance of information exchange at regional and interregional level, as well as networking, in order to improve synergies among all members of the Mountain Partnership;

We stress that the implementation of the objectives of the Mountain Partnership is a direct contribution to poverty alleviation and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

We recognize that watershed management is a priority and, taking into account the close relationship between mountain ecosystems and water catchments, we recognize the importance of the protection, maintenance and restoration of water sources;

Mountain ecosytems are most vulnerable to the extreme events associated with climate change. We, therefore, commit ourselves to achieve the best possible preparedness in view of these events, and to strengthen all necessary capacities in this regard. We note in this context the opportunities offered by the upcoming Tenth Session of the Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December 2004;

We encourage all Mountain Partnership members to develop Partnership Initiatives and, in this context, we urge them to implement the Cusco Framework for Action.